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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## PEN, PENCIL AND PRINT.

IN the room of a well-known artist, I picked up the other day an English novel, reprinted by Lippincott & Co., of Philadelphia, and opening it at random came across the following passage which will doubtless be of interest to many of my readers. Since the undertakers, assembled in convention, solemnly voted that they should be called "funeral directors," we have had nothing better than "decorative adviser."

Mr. Rigsby was not easily satisfied; he was determined to have a good house, and he got the best, with large gardens sloping down the hill, lawns, tennis-ground enclosed within yew hedges, and terraces with roses. He had roughed it in Ceylon in old days; the bungalow in which Dulcinea had been brought up was plain, and slenderly furnished. In England Mr. Rigsby was exacting. Dulcinea would be a duchess and he must show the world that he had a fortune that allowed him to live like a prince. He bought carriages and horses and engaged servants, put the men in the Rigsby livery of bluff and blue, made his coachman powder his hair and sit on a hammer-cloth. He sent orders to town for pictures, and had the house put into the hands of a decorative adviser.

"I know nothing about art furniture," he said. "So long as I have a chair to sit on, it is all one to me what is the shape, but—one must be in fashion, or risk being thought a boor."

He had his own rooms plainly furnished—a hard bed and no carpets on the floor. "I like to spit," he said, and carpets get in the way of spitting." He had his Cingalese manservant, who understood his wants, and none of the other men were allowed near him. He lived very much to himself, smoking and reading Indian papers in his snuggery, and it was with difficulty that he could be drawn from it to entertain guests in the drawing room. He was sitting in his room, with a fire in the grate, and his feet against the marble jams, when he was told that a visitor was desirous of speaking to him on urgent business.

"My name is of little importance," said the stranger. "It is quite true that I have called on business. I have heard, sir, that you are desirous of furnishing this most charming residence with everything that taste and luxury demands. My name, sir, is Lazarus—Emmanuel Lazarus, of the 'Golden Balls,' Barbican. I happen to have, sir, a very choice collection of artistic odds and ends, which I offer at a ridiculously low price. I am a collector of objects of art and antiquity, and it is my pleasure to furnish gentlemen of taste and means with the best treasures of the past. I have also some very nice old Spanish lace, which your beautiful young lady might like to see. I got the spoils of several churches at a bargain, the lace is from the altars, and I shall be proud to think that one whom I hear on all sides spoken of as an Oriental star should wear it. Old china, sir! no man can call himself a gentleman, whatever his birth and fortune, or invite his friends to his house without a blush, if he has not his cheffoniers and side-table and walls covered with old china. Old silver, also, sir, is greatly in request. I happen to have some very choice apostle spoons. No one can hold up his head in society without at least a couple of apostle spoons in Dutch silver sugar basins."

"Thank you," said Mr. Rigsby; "I understand none of these things. I have put myself into the hands of a decorator."

"Would you mind telling me, sir, the style in which the decorator is going to do you up? Louis Quatorze, Queen Anne, Chippendale, or Victorian? Are you going to be painted over with cranes and sunflowers? I've known a lady daddoed round, with a skirting of Japanese rush mats, all gilt, and very effective it was. If you'll allow me to suggest you that, sir, you would find it neat and warm. I happen to have a quantity of these rush mats all plaited in different patterns. Or are you going into Chippendale, and have your legs curved, and turned fine, and fluted? I don't hold to having your legs made too spindly. There is a loss of strength. Still, fashion is for it. I have some of the very finest Chippendale ever seen in stock; I can give you legs that are in the first style, and yet are not spindly. Or—if I may make so bold as to ask—are you going to be Rococo?"

Mr. Rigsby stared. "I do not understand—"

"A combination of rock and shell. Are they going to encrust you with rockwork and shellwork, and scoop out curves in you and fill in with flowers, and not leave you a straight line anywhere, and gild you from top to toe? The effect is gorgeous rather than classic. The First Empire is a reaction against that, severe, subdued—nude. Are you going in for that? If so, I have some choice little articles, clocks and side-tables and mirrors."

Mr. Rigsby stood up. "Sir, I am very busy: I leave all this to the decorator. I am incompetent to judge for myself. One thing you may be quite sure of: I will never go in for the nude. The climate don't admit of it. It is different altogether in Ceylon. I wish you good morning."

"Stay, stay!" exclaimed the Jew, alarmed at the prospect of losing his opportunity in his over-eagerness to deal. "Might I ask you one thing more, sir? I have matter of the utmost importance to communicate. I cannot speak of the matter in this room. I am afraid of being overheard. It is not about Louis Quatorze, or Rococo, or First Empire."

"There is no one here. We are quite alone, but I cannot imagine you can have anything to communicate that will interest me. I have put myself into the hands of a decorator, and given him *carte blanche*."

We have had spiritual, legal and financial advisers, but this is the first time we have had decorative advisers. I enjoyed the passage quoted above so much that I read the book through. It is entitled "Court Royal," and will do to kill a few hours very pleasantly.

The religious element appears to be distinctly lacking in the Christmas and New Year Cards of the season, and angels give way very largely to flowers, children, birds and landscapes. Of course Prang & Co., of Boston, take the lead in the number and variety of their offering. The designs are artistic and the reproduction excellent; but what is most striking is the thoroughly

American character of the whole line. Not only are the designs painted by American artists, but, the production being in this country, the lithographic artists have more readily entered into the spirit of the work and retained the specifically American character of the designs. The line is more varied than ever. Besides the regular Christmas and New Year Cards, it comprises a large collection of dainty paper and satin Novelties; all kinds of elegant Calendars for the table, the desk, the mantel, the wall and the pocket; a number of Fine Art Pictures on paper and satin; and a large assortment of Art Books and Booklets.

And speaking of Calendars there is the usual assortment of all kinds being distributed, and yet there appears to be a steadily marked advance in the character of many of those sent out by advertisers. One of the choicest of the season was drawn by Charles Graham for Lindner, Eddy & Clauss, the lithographers of 66 Centre Street, and by them reproduced in water colors on grained paper. It is effective and artistic.

An ingenious reader sends me a note in which he makes the following suggestion:

"It has occurred to me, and the impression is worth noting as bearing on decorative effects, that the luminosity of air that envelopes the two figures in the 'Angelus' of Millet is produced by a ground of silver leaf on which light transparent tints have been imposed."

As very few people can afford to pay the price for the Angelus in order to make such a crucial test of its technique, it is not likely that the truth or falsity of this suggestion will ever be established.

The January number of Scribner's Magazine appears with additional space and a new department at the end of the number conducted under the title "The Point of View." An opportunity is here given to the best writers for a brief and familiar discussion of subjects of both passing and permanent interest. In the January number the subjects touched in a bright and informal way are: "The Barye Exhibition," "Thackeray's Life," "Social Life in Print," and "The French as Artists." The success of the magazine has been such that the publishers feel justified in adding these new pages to a magazine already wonderfully low in price.

Homes in City, Suburbs and Country will be the subject of a group of articles in Scribner's this year by three of the chief authorities upon these three types of American houses and their surroundings—the first, on The City House, by Mr. Charles F. McKim, the well-known architect, appearing early in the year. Connected with this group also will be a contribution of the greatest interest on what has been accomplished in the direction of providing homes by Building Associations and other bodies, which have become one of the few successful forms of co operation throughout the country. This article will differ from Mr. Linn's "Building and Loan Associations" in showing not merely the machinery of this work, but what has been actually done in specific cases. The papers on the three types of homes will be illustrated with some novel features.

Referring to the modern mixture of styles in decoration and furniture, a writer in London Truth chats pleasantly in this wise:

I was talking to a girl the other day about some slight alterations we are having made in our drawing-rooms, and she dilated upon the vulgarity of people who mixed up their styles and their periods. I innocently asked her what style and period her rooms were in, looking around at them as I spoke. I thought she looked a little puzzled, but she replied, "Modern." I thereupon suggested that a Chippendale table that stood in the window was an anachronism, and that a Queen Anne mirror that hung on the wall was an inconsistency. "But perhaps you do not so much mind period and nationality," I suggested, for I can never bear to pen people up in a corner without showing them a way out of it if I can. She jumped at my loophole of escape, and said, "Yes, we are nothing if not English," and I held my peace generously, though I saw Japanese fans on the wall, Imari vases in a Renaissance cabinet, and I saw some good and sweet old china flanked by large Turkish vases that rested on a Persian carpet. It is impossible to be strictly purist in these matters nowadays, and it is far wiser to discard all idea of limitations. Admit at once all anachronisms, so long as they are harmonious in color and lovely in form, and be happy. The professed purists strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. They protest against Cairene woodwork among English furniture, but they swallow a Turkey carpet as easily as though it were a chocolate cream. Were we to restrict ourselves to one period or one country, we should lose half the delights of color and of form that surround us in such luxuriosity just now. Fancy being tied down by a Kidderminster carpet to have nothing but modern English furniture and ornaments in one's rooms! In the first place, English china and pottery are much more expensive than Japanese, and in point of color, though often exquisitely delicate and superbly finished, we have not mastered the secret of effectiveness, as possessed by the Japanese and the Hindoo. The glowing red that their artists use so lavishly is seldom seen in English wares, and, when seen, it is not combined so strikingly with other tints.

Miss Ada Cone, whose pencil and pen are both favorably

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known to the readers of the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, has written, and Wm. T. Comstock has published, "Perspective, a series of elementary lectures." It is one of the best manuals of the kind I have ever seen, and some of its illustrations are entirely novel.

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The Cosmopolitan, under the management of Mr. Walker, has taken a new lease of life. Its December table of contents was varied and interesting, and the illustrations, especially some of those in "Child Faces, on Christmas Morning," and "The Flower Market of New York," rank with those of any magazine in the country.

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Hints on House Building is the title of a clever little book by Robert Grimshaw, of which a second enlarged edition has just been published by the Practical Publishing Co., of New York.

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The holiday numbers of the English magazines made some of the chromos given out with the so-called art papers on this side look very weary.

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George R. Halm designed the cover for Cassel & Co.'s edition of Marie Bashkirtseff, which Mr. Gladstone called a book without a parallel, and which everybody who reads anything is now reading.

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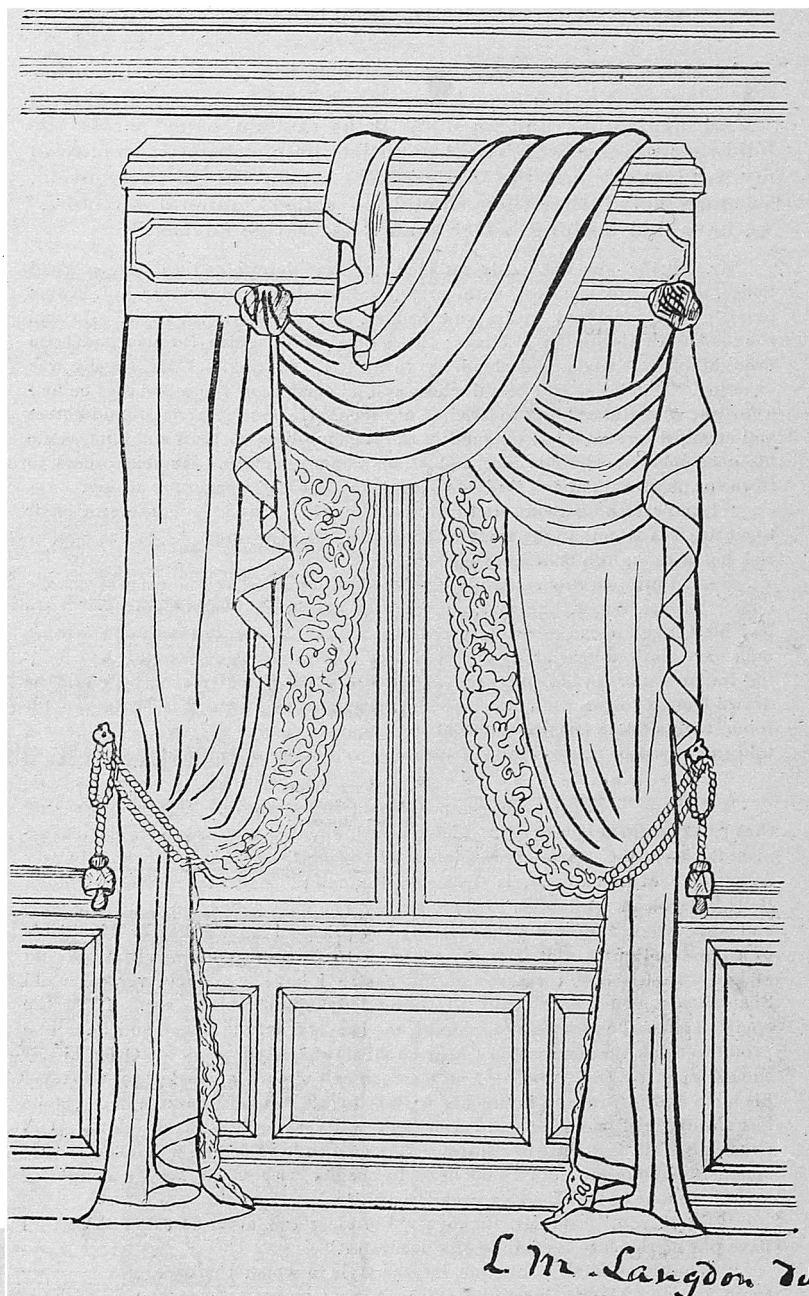
Another of Cassel's publications which is meeting with great success is Emma Homan Thayer's "Wild Flowers of the Pacific Coast." It is deliciously gotten up and especially valuable to flower painters.

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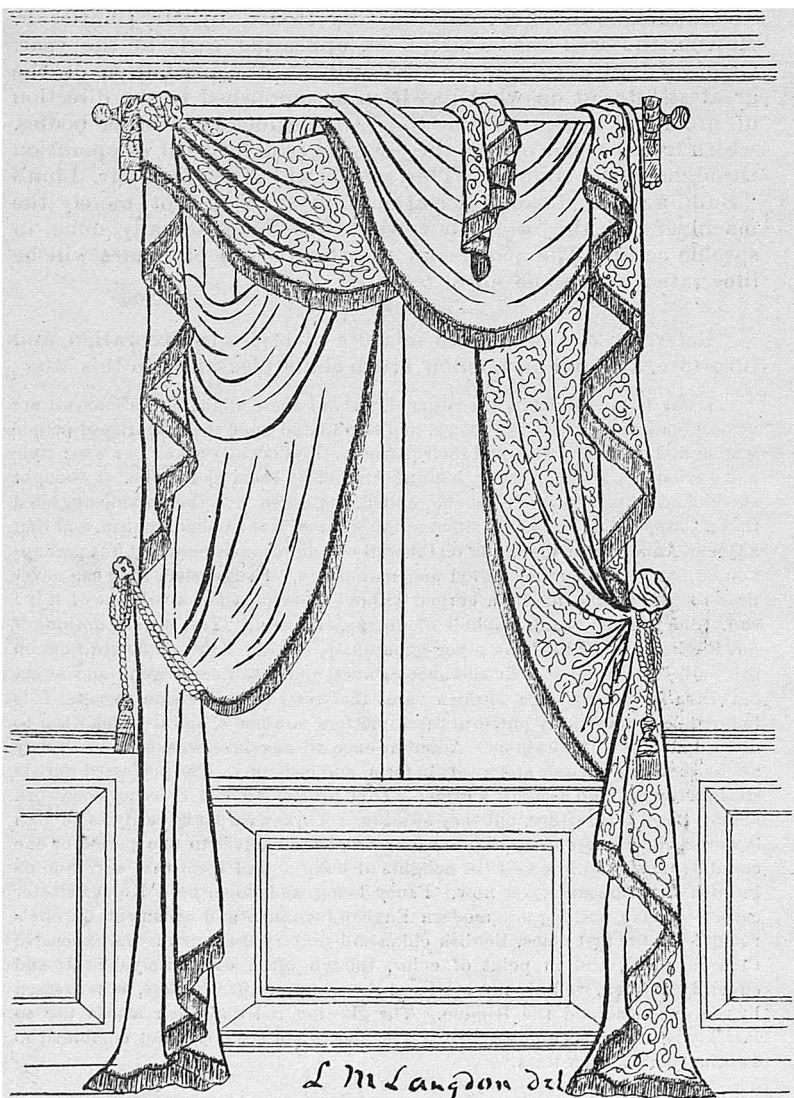
Among recent issues by Scribner & Welford is "Days Among Industrials," by Alexander Japp, L.L.D., F.R., S.E. Some of the chapters in condensed form have appeared in English magazines, but all are readable and replete with knowledge of the subjects treated. A general idea of the author's style can be formed from the article on Pearls which appears elsewhere in this issue of the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

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On the covers of some American gift books are to be found excellent specimens of that process of embellishment known as



MODERN FRENCH DRAPERY.



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tooling. Since the introduction of plates for decorating book-covers little in the way of tooling is to be met with that approaches the work of olden times. As showing the skill of which manipulation in this art admits, experts are able to recognize, among all varieties of design, the work of former masters of the art. Such books sell at high prices for their covers, not for their contents. We notice some fine raised arabesque work in the choicer specimens, but a number of otherwise good designs are impaired by the absence of connection between center and corner ornaments, also by the want of due proportion in the details.

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The most notable feature in the Court of Appeals room in the Capitol at Albany, is the Judges' Bench, forty feet in length, which was designed by the late H. H. Richardson. The front and ends are composed of twenty oak panels (no two alike) which are covered with the richest carvings, most delicate and graceful in design and worked out with precision and strength. It forms a great artistic Master-piece, full of practical suggestions to every industrial art worker. Judson & Gordon, of 10 East 14th Street, have reproduced them exactly in twenty separate views by autogravure, and will mail them \$ .00 per set.

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Alfred Trumble has changed *The Collector* from a monthly to a semi-monthly, and continues to make it such an authority upon Art, Bibliography, Antiquarianism, etc., as only he, among a very select few in America who have the knowledge, has the literary acumen and industry to make it. At \$1.00 a year it ought to be indispensable to every person interested in the slightest degree in the subjects of which it treats. The publication office is now at 151 West 35th Street.

AN instant removal of ink stains from oak, ash and mahogany may be secured by applying a solution of a small quantity of oxalic acid dissolved in water, adding a few drops of spirits of nitre.